

# **TARGETED PREVENTION: JUVENILE JUSTICE & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

**Report of the Prevention Work Group of the  
Juvenile Jurisdiction Policy and Operations Coordinating Council  
September 2008**

## **Introduction**

A targeted prevention services design for 16 & 17 year old youth (at risk of court involvement) must take into account the wide array of prevention efforts by many state agencies, including those identified by the Child Poverty and Prevention Council<sup>1</sup>, as well as the positive youth development asset work of the Youth Futures Committee<sup>2</sup>. These prevention efforts involve services to support and foster youth development in the areas of basic needs, physical health, positive social/emotional development, job readiness/financial literacy, and formal education. While still focusing on prevention, the Prevention Work Group of the Juvenile Jurisdiction Policy and Operations Coordinating Council (JJPOCC) developed a targeted prevention design that enhances the above array of services and enhances the availability of services to high risk individuals in three key areas: Youth Development, Truancy Prevention and Police Diversion.

The table below summarises funding requests to support the recommendations of the Prevention Work Group. These program areas should begin for the full fiscal year to allow for program start-up and beginning of prevention efforts as soon as possible. The increase in funding for the second year would allow each project funded in year one to continue at level funding and a second round of competitive procurement to take place in year two.

<b>Program</b>	<b>FY 2009/2010</b>	<b>FY 2010/2011</b>
Youth Development	\$2,475,000	\$4,725,000
Truancy Prevention	\$700,000	\$1,200,000
Police Diversion	\$575,000	\$1,075,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$3,750,000</b>	<b>\$7,000,000</b>

While the primary focus of these efforts is *preventing court involvement*, this service design is also consistent with prevention in the wider sense—fostering the development of positive youth development assets and ameliorating threats to youth success in school and life.

The programs would be administered by the Office of Policy and Management, Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division with the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) as the final funding authority. The JJAC is the Governor-appointed committee responsible for overseeing the distribution and use of federal funds under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act in Connecticut. The membership of the JJAC reflects federal requirements to have 15 to 33 members, one-fifth under the age of 24 at appointment, at least one locally elected official and the majority of the members—including the chair—cannot be full-time government employees. The purpose of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee is to prevent delinquency and improve Connecticut's juvenile justice system. For further information on the JJAC and its activities, see its web site at [www.ctjjac.org](http://www.ctjjac.org).

<sup>1</sup> See Connecticut Child Poverty and Prevention Council Progress Council Report, January 9, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Connecticut Youth Future's Committee, 2008, "Connecticut's Framework for Positive Youth Development."

# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

## 1. Eligibility

This competitive program would be for municipalities and agencies that propose to provide positive activities for youth ages 12 to 18 in high need neighborhoods in Connecticut. It is expected that 20 to 40 projects would be funded. It would also support technical assistance to program providers in youth development and program management and an evaluation of these neighborhood center programs.

It is expected that 20 to 40 projects will be funded in the range of \$50,000 to \$100,000 each. (Monies for an evaluation component—\$150,000—and technical assistance—\$75,000—are in addition for a total of \$2,475,000.)

## 2. Program Description

The Youth Development Program would support specific local initiatives to increase positive experiences for youth ages 12 through 18 years. Applicants **must** propose to include the following six components.

- a. Neighborhood Setting At a location convenient for youth within the target neighborhood (which could be a school building), a neighborhood site where all of the other program components can be delivered. The site will be safe, appropriate, accepting and accessible.
- b. Qualified Staff (Paid and Volunteer) The neighborhood site will be properly staffed with qualified, supervised and supported staff to insure the safety of the youth.
- c. Program The program that is provided must be appropriate to the age, maturation level, gender, culture, and community needs of its youth clientele with a goal of preventing criminal activity and illegal drug use. Sites must offer a range of activities and experiences of interest to youth.
- d. Parent Involvement Parents must be involved in planning the program initially and on an on-going basis.
- e. Youth Involvement Youth involvement means youth have many viable opportunities for input into the planning and management of the site and programs.
- f. Applicant Agency The applicant agency and, if applicable, the implementing agency/organization for each site must be experienced in working with youth ages 12 to 18 and actively involved in the neighborhood.

## 3. Performance Data

On a regular basis, the selected agencies receiving Youth Development Program funding must collect data on youth who use the site, on programs offered, and on parent involvement.

#### 4. Program Criteria

- A. Need for a Youth Development Program as measured by:
  - 1. high poverty rates for youth ages 12 to 18 in the neighborhood to be served; and
  - 2. low numbers of youth ages 12 to 18 with access to similar types of programs offering positive experiences for youth.
- B. The quality of the program, which includes:
  - 1. responsiveness to program component requirements;
  - 2. the extent to which the planning for the proposed project involved youth, and the extent to which the proposed project will involve youth in leadership roles;
  - 3. the applicant or implementing agency's experience working with youth ages 12 to 18;
  - 4. appropriateness and reasonableness of costs and the percent of the budget identified for direct services;
  - 5. maximum use of existing resources; and
  - 6. overall feasibility of the proposed project.

# TRUANCY PREVENTION

## 1. Eligibility

This competitive program would be open to school districts that are members of the Connecticut Consortium on School Attendance as of January 1 for programs that begin the following school year. Currently, these school districts are:

Ansonia	Bethel	Canterbury	Danbury	East Windsor	Fairfield	Hamden
Hartford	Killingly	Middletown	New Britain	New Haven	New Milford	Norwich
Plainfield	RSD #10	RSD #13	RSD #19	Stonington	Thompson	Vernon
Waterbury	Waterford	Winchester	Windham.			

However, any school district in Connecticut may join the Consortium by expressing interest and submitting student attendance data for the previous school year. See the JJAC web site for more details. [www.ctjjac.org](http://www.ctjjac.org) It is expected that 5 to 10 projects would be funded. This program would also support technical assistance to member school districts and an evaluation of the funded programs.

The Truancy Prevention grants would provide \$50,000 to \$150,000 for a 12-month period with the option of non-competitive continuation funding for an additional year at the same level of funding. It is expected that 5 to 10 projects will be funded. A total of \$700,000 in funds for the Truancy Prevention/School Attendance Program includes \$100,000 for the evaluation component and \$100,000 of support for the Connecticut Consortium on School Attendance to provide training and information-sharing opportunities in addition to \$500,000 in program funds.

## 2. Program Description

School districts that apply for funds under this program must implement data-driven plans. The planning process must include review of local attendance data provided by the Connecticut Consortium on School Attendance and other district and school information by a planning group that meets a minimum of two times and is composed of at least the following representatives: the superintendent, a principal, a teacher, an information technology person, a counselor and someone working on attendance issues. The planning team must receive input from a student advisory committee that reflects the racial, ethnic, and cultural composition of the community's student population and includes students at various levels of academic and social competencies.

Funds under this Truancy Prevention program must be used in one or more of the following categories:

- A. **Making Attendance a Priority** – building awareness and commitment to regular school attendance in school buildings, in homes, and in the broader community.
- B. **Establishing Effective Attendance Policies** – ensuring that effective attendance policies are in place and enforced consistently across the district and within school buildings.
- C. **Implementing Programs** – providing best practice prevention and intervention approaches.

### **3. Performance Data**

On a regular basis, the selected school districts receiving Truancy Prevention program funding must collect data on the youth served, changes in average daily attendance and the percentage of students attending less than 90% (or chronic non-attenders).

### **4. Program Criteria**

- A. Responsiveness to program description and requirements.
- B. Selection of project strategies that are reasonable given local attendance data, consistent with best practices, likely to affect school attendance performance targets, and justifiable given available resources.
- C. Extent to which the proposed project enhances and complements existing attendance improvement strategies.
- D. Design and feasibility of the evaluation component, if applicable.
- E. Commitment and support from the school superintendent.
- F. Appropriateness and reasonableness of costs.
- G. Maximum use of existing resources.
- H. Overall feasibility of the proposed project.

# **Police Diversion**

## **1. Eligibility**

Local and regional, public and private agencies are eligible to apply for the Police Diversion Program. Grants will provide \$10,000 to \$40,000 for a 12-month period with the option of non-competitive continuation funding for an additional year at the same level of funding. It is expected that 15 to 45 projects will be funded. A total of \$575,000 in funds has been allocated for the Police Diversion project area with \$75,000 for technical assistance and evaluation support.

## **2. Program Description**

The Police Diversion Program will support juvenile review boards (JRBs) or civilian case screeners in local communities. Both of these options seek to provide a diversionary and preventative alternative to juvenile justice system involvement for juvenile offenders who commit a first and/or minor violation of the law. Both support a collaborative effort among police, courts, community agencies, schools and families to provide juvenile offenders with an understanding of the consequences of their actions and the support and services the juvenile and family need to prevent future misconduct. They are carried out in the juvenile's community, without the formality, stigma, costs or time delays associated with the juvenile court process, and without resulting in a court record for the juvenile.

This project area will support: 1) Juvenile Review Board (JRB) activity in agencies seeking to serve communities with no access to a JRB or agencies seeking to expand their JRB to include 16 and 17 year olds; and 2) civilian case screeners working in police departments with no civilian case screeners. For both project options, police must be responsible for the initial decision to divert juveniles from the juvenile court. Specific criteria for diversion must be developed by each project, but should be limited to juveniles accused of minor criminal offenses. Cases involving serious crimes, repeat offenders, high need juveniles, juveniles who do not admit responsibility for their actions, or other situations where the established requirements for diversion are not present should not be diverted.

For a JRB project, there must be a Juvenile Review Board composed of police, school and community youth service agency personnel, most of whom will serve as community volunteers or as part of their existing employment. There should be a part time staff person at each JRB who should be a paid professional with appropriate qualifications for working with youth. This person's duties will include interviewing juveniles and families, explaining the JRB program, and being familiar with the services and programs available in the community to meet the needs of juveniles referred to the JRB. This staff person will also serve as a resource for the family if they encounter problems while the case is pending before the JRB and will provide follow up and monitoring services as the case concludes.

For a civilian case screener program, the screener is the paid professional and makes the decisions concerning the juvenile's case.

## **3. Performance Data**

Police should be responsible for maintaining data on the number of cases referred to diversion compared to those sent to juvenile court and for checking whether juveniles referred to the project are rearrested over the next two years.

The projects should have clear, measurable outcomes that will be reported on a quarterly basis. They must include the number of children referred to the program (reported by age, gender, race and ethnicity), the nature of the misconduct, the time the matter was pending, the programs and services recommended, the number of successful completions, the number of and reasons for program failures.

#### **4. Program Criteria**

- A. Need for a Police Diversion program based on crime rates and referrals to court.
- B. Responsiveness to program description and requirements.
- C. Extent to which the proposed project enhances and complements existing diversion strategies.
- D. Commitment and support from appropriate community agencies.
- E. Appropriateness and reasonableness of costs.
- F. Maximum use of existing resources.
- G. Overall feasibility of the proposed project.

Each of the three program areas—Youth Development, Truancy Prevention and Police Diversion—would fund projects for up to three years. Projects would be prohibited from supplanting existing funds, and the Office of Policy and Management and the JJAC would encourage and support applicants by providing training sessions on applying for funds.